

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

and your predominance must be utterly destroyed." Benedetto Alberti called from the window to the crowd in the piazza : " Shout, all of you, *Viva il Popolo !*"

The alarm spread through the city ; all the shops were shut; the people began to arm. The captains of the Parte Guelfa and their adherents, nobles and *popolani* alike, had secretly armed, and were assembled in the palace of the Party to take measures against the Gonfaloniere. Among those present were Lapo da Castiglionchio, Piero degli Albizzi, Niccolo Soderini, the hated Bartolo Siminetti, and both Piero and Ristoro Canigiani. But, hearing the tumult, they quietly dispersed and returned to their own homes. Overborne by the clamour, the Colleges passed the measure; and, on the following day, but by a very narrow margin, it was approved by the requisite two-thirds in the Council of the People and the Council of the Commune.

For three days things hung thus in suspense, the city guarded at night, the shops closed, while the Signoria, the representatives of the Guilds, and the captains of the Party engaged in fruitless negotiations. On Tuesday, June 22, the " antevigil" of St. John, the Guilds rose in arms, and came with their banners into the piazza, shouting : *Viva il Popolo !* The Signoria empowered the magistrates and Colleges to reform the city and abolish the unpopular laws of the Parte Guelfa ; but, in the meanwhile, led by the men of the Guild of the Furriers with their banner, the populace had begun to take vengeance on their own account. Instigated, if not actually by the government, at least by those who had been admonished, they assailed the houses of the leaders of the Parte Guelfa. The houses of Lapo da Castiglionchio and his family overlooking the Ponte Rubaconte were first attacked, Messer Lapo himself escaping into the Casentino disguised as a friar. The houses of Carlo Strozzi near the Porta Rossa, of Bartolo Siminetti in Mercato Nuovo, of the Albizzi near San Piero Maggiore, of Filippo Corsini, and others, were successively looted and given to the flames. Then the mob passed over the Arno, and, shouting abuse against " the hypocrite Niccolo and his blessed Catherine," destroyed the houses of Niccolo and Tommaso

